

01



Queering WPS in Practice

1.0 Queering WPS in Practice: The Four Pillars of Women, Peace and Security

In this section we offer recommendations for how to bring a queer and feminist approach to implementing each of the four pillars of WPS (prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery). This broader approach allows for more transformative visions for gender, peace and security. Our suggestions for queering the four pillars are not only for gender advisors and others with specific WPS roles. The actions we propose are for all peace and security policy makers and practitioners.

To end gendered insecurities LGBTQ+ people face in conflict, we need to address underlying social, economic, and political discrimination. Given the rise of anti-trans and anti-gender movements globally, Global North countries must also focus on aligning their domestic and foreign agendas for gender justice. The US, UK and Canada are all facing a rise in anti-trans rhetoric, and anti-LGBTQ hate crimes.

Responding to conflict violence is not only about ending conflict, but also about confronting the limiting gender norms that continue to hinder promoting LGBTQ+ rights. Making room for queer visions for peace begins with supporting LGBTQ+ communities in times of transition.¹⁴ Implementing a queer and feminist vision for gender, peace and security is not just about what language is included in WPS National Action Plans or if an LGBTQ woman who speaks at the UN Security Council. While those can be meaningful actions if done in collaboration with LGBTQ+ organizations, queering is also about reframing approaches to gender. Queering is about troubling who WPS is for, and what we want the WPS agenda to do. To queer how we think about WPS is to deviate from the binary framing of engaging men and saving women. Instead, queering is about creating and embracing spaces for expansive and transformative conversations about gender.

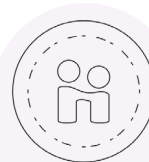
In this section we first take a closer look at each of the pillars. After a brief overview of each pillar, we include a set of recommended actions for queering the pillar. These recommendations are informed by Colombia Diversa's consultations with feminist and LGBTQ women in Colombia.¹⁵



Prevention

This pillar includes measures that anticipate and prevent the occurrence of violence against women and sexual minorities. The following points should be taken into consideration:

- Effective mechanisms to identify risks faced by lesbian, bisexual, trans and queer women
- Strategies to address discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in society, including lesbophobia, homophobia, and transphobia



Participation

This pillar includes measures to ensure citizens' voice and vote in decision-making at different stages of conflict and post-conflict. It is important to think about actions to increase the participation of LGBTQ women specifically in the following contexts:

- Effective mechanisms to identify risks faced by lesbian, bisexual, trans and queer women
- Strategies to address discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in society, including lesbophobia, homophobia, and transphobia



Protection

This pillar includes measures aimed at guaranteeing the safety of women, including economic, political and social aspects of security, as well as actions to guarantee access to justice. These measures include:

- Mechanisms for attention to the differentiated violence due to prejudice.
- Appropriate context analysis mechanisms to prove and punish crimes of violence due to prejudice against people due to their LGBTQ+ identity or assumed LGBTQ+ identity.
- Actions that guarantee dignified access for LGBTQ women to physical and mental health care



Relief and Recovery

This pillar includes measures to respond to the specific needs of LGBTQ women in situations of armed conflict and to aid in recovery from violence. It is important to think about actions that respond to:

- The sexual and reproductive rights of LGBTQ women, as well as access to transition-related processes in the case of trans women.
- The need for access to legal advice, humanitarian aid, reparations, justice, medical care, mental health care and access to livelihoods

1.1 Queering the Prevention Pillar of Women, Peace and Security

WPS initiatives under the prevention pillar focus on the prevention of conflict and all forms of violence against women and 'girls in conflict-related environments. In order to queer how violence is understood, we need to challenge assumptions about who commits violence and why.

Queering implementation of the prevention pillar also requires transforming social imaginaries about how to identify and manage the existing insecurities LGBTQ+ people face in conflict-related environments. Prevention of violence against LBT women requires an understanding of how homo-, bi and transphobic violence occurs in whichever context a WPS approach is being applied.

Reflective Question:

What are the vulnerabilities LGBTQ+ people face in your context? These problems are compounded by intersecting discrimination based on sexuality, gender, ability, race, and class. In developing support systems for certain queer and trans communities (i. e. lesbian women, transgender men) can your programmes consider these precarities together?

The prevention pillar includes actions that anticipate and seek to prevent violent conflict, including gender¹⁶ and sexuality-based violences (rape, femicide, transphobic attacks).¹⁷ Prevention efforts should consider specific risks faced by LGBTQ+ people and strategies to end toxic masculinity and confront homo-bi, and transphobia in society. Prison and detention politics can increase the risk of violence against LGBTQ+ people.

In many conflict-affected environments, armed actors violate LGBTQ+ people to "correct", punish or eliminate them. The message sent by this homo-, bi-, and transphobic violence is that LGBTQ+ people are not worthy of respect or care. LGBTQ+ people also experience high rates of displacement, including being displaced from their homes by their own families. LGBTQ+ people experience sexual violence and other forms of control over their sexuality. Harms against LGBTQ+ people may also be an early warning of future atrocities.¹⁸ Regulating sexuality by punishing "failure" to meet heteronormative and cisgender expectations of gender order is central dimension of GBV.¹⁹

The prevailing idea that discussing and supporting LGBTQ+ people in conflict environments is too dangerous also neglects the way that queer and trans communities of sexual and gender minorities continue to thrive and evolve in times of conflict. The best way to develop peace and conflict programmes mindful of LGBTQ+ people's vulnerabilities, is to work with local LGBTQ+ organizations to determine the most pressing issues for the community, and how best to work together to address them.

Actions to queer the prevention pillar

Ensure social justice reforms are informed by and meet the needs of LGBTQ+ people. Rather than focusing on what communities want, current systems of prevention often focus narrowly on "bringing people to justice." Support transformative justice over criminal justice. Learn about community defense zones and community-controlled databases to find missing and murdered.²⁰

Outline specific risks faced by LGBTQ+ people from an intersectional perspective. Analysis should be disaggregated based on different communities within the broader LGBTQ+ community. For example: the risks suffered by trans women (who are usually more visible) are different from lesbian women or trans men (who tend to be more invisible).

Audit information systems that record GBV to be sure it includes LGBTQ+ people. In the Colombian Single Registry of Victims, the categories of women and LGBTQ are used exclusively, resulting in the invisibility of the problems suffered by lesbian, bisexual, trans and queer women. Look for patterns of GBV against LGBTQ+ people.

Raise public awareness of LGBTQ+ people's lived experiences of violence and discrimination.¹⁸ Colombia Diversa advocates for disseminating the Truth Commission's findings through meetings and teach-outs and continuing to collect the living memories of LGBTQ+ people.

Design and implement training for officials about sexuality. Train those who are the first point of contact between LGBTQ+ people and public services (e. g. , educators, healthcare providers, immigration officials). Trainings should improve how officials respond and care for LGBTQ+ survivors.

Applying a more expansive approach to understanding GBV

- Focus not only on women, children and men, but also those outside the gender binary
- Survivors of GBV may be LGBTQ+, which is important for explaining both the rationale of targeting and consequences
- Recognize individuals who are LGBTQ+ are not a distinct group of survivors other than men and women, rather they are overlapping and expanded beyond men and women

1.2 Queering the Participation Pillar of Women, Peace and Security

Evaluate and monitor the officials who respond to and investigate violence against LGBTQ+ people. These mechanisms might include protocols, evaluation tools, and sanctions against noncompliance. Research about the targeted sexual violence against LGBTQ people in Colombia during the conflict found it is cyclical and persistent in nature.

Map out how transphobia and homophobia manifest in armed conflict. Examine what actors in your community benefit from this discriminatory behaviour. Analyze common homophobic and transphobic language. This language may be evident in movies, news coverage of LGBTQ+ people and educational material about sexuality.

Feminists recognize the WPS agenda as a powerful tool to call on increased women's participation in all peace and security efforts. There is often a historical lag between feminist and LGBTQ+ movements. In many instances, this lag in movement development is because of interventions to police gender and sexuality. Women's organizations can help to address this by highlighting LGBTQ+ community members when bringing local perspectives to peace and security. Likewise, international efforts to prioritize women's experiences of conflict should include the experiences of lesbian, bisexual and transgender women.²¹

Full, equal, and meaningful participation consists of actions that seek to ensure the voice and vote of citizens in decision-making in the different stages of conflict and post-conflict. Those in respected leadership roles can make a meaningful impact in addressing discrimination by openly and publicly advocating engaging with LGBTQ+ people. In women's peacebuilding spaces, allyship from cisgender and heterosexual women in leadership to openly supporting lesbian, bisexual and transgender women can have meaningful impact for shifting norms about diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

These proposed actions below are based on the Colombian context.

We recognize that in many places, opportunities for participation might be very narrow or nonexistent, and public participation could put LGBTQ+ people in danger. At the same time, there are many contexts where LGBTQ+ communities could be more involved in leadership.

Colonialism and gender²²

Activists and scholars including María Lugones who call attention to the colonality of gender underscore the historically situated understanding of gender. In particular, they raise questions regarding the historical processes under which the concept of gender was constructed, who it was that was gendered, and who was then denied a place in the gender system. Others like Chandra Mohanty, also critique the universalism of Western feminism that undertheorizes the reality of non-white and non-Western gendered communities.

Actions for queering the prevention pillar

Support LGBTQ women as visible leaders in gender, peace, and security work. This requires creating spaces to facilitate difficult conversations between feminist and LGBTQ+ movements. When looking for speakers or funding projects, consider including a note about prioritizing queer women's work or being direct about how while queer men are part of queering WPS too, it is the queer women who must be centered and supported in leading queering WPS work.

Ensure feminist LGBTQ+ perspectives in decision making about public policy including all consultations pertaining to women and gender. Ensure representation of LGBTQ+ people's needs in decisionmaking scenarios, not only with voice but with vote.

Create active listening safer spaces for dialoguing with LGBTQ women. This should also be a space supportive of those identities that tend to be more invisible in discussions of gender, such as trans men or non-binary people. These safer spaces can include a variety of stakeholders so that grassroots organizations, with or without legal standing can share their problems and seek solutions collectively.

Tips for designing trainings

Develop training from an experiential approach including local LGBTQ+ participants. Be sure to incorporate an intersectional perspective.

Reflect on institutional and personal responsibility in the face of discrimination.

Inform with examples used in simulations or case studies informed by real-world examples, developed with local queer and trans participants.

Provide tools such as manuals or guidelines to officials for consultation, evaluation, and monitoring of prevention strategies.

Create channels for advocacy for LGBTQ+ organizations in the peace and security space. This is especially important for events like the CSW and annual Open Debates on WPS happening in New York, which is much less accessible to civil society organizations.

Design security strategies to ensure LGBTQ+ people's participation in peacebuilding. For example, be sure to use the preferred and accessible communication channels for people according to their context.

Recognize and celebrate the queer young people who are working to advance the goals of WPS. By celebrating queer young peacebuilders, the community has an opportunity to affirm and create enabling environments for the young people already active in these spaces. This will also change the way young queer peacebuilders identify and work with the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) agenda, expanding support and innovative approaches to building peace.²³ Continue to recognize the accomplishments of queer youth and share opportunities for leadership where possible.

1.3 Queering the Protection Pillar of Women, Peace and Security

Implementation of the protection pillar focuses on the protection of women from physical violence during conflict. The concept of protection could be expanded to encompass physical, economic, psychosocial, and cultural dimensions of justice and security.

LGBTQ+ people continue to face discrimination when their expressions of public identity are seen as uncomfortable, exotic, and laughable. This places LGBTQ+ people in a subordinate place with a lack of protection, marginalized from those cisgender and heterosexual people seen as "real men and women." Forms of repression and patterns of violence common in dictatorships and "dirty wars" often give way to a context in which multiple prejudices can be acted upon, as a supposed national (often "civilizational") project is pursued. Security is also economic. Many LGBTQ+ people have been disproportionately excluded from formal education or employment, or other economic resources.

There is an under-registration of violations against LGBTQ+ people

Reflective Exercise:

How is the health system in your country is unfriendly to LGBTQ+ people? Are lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer women able to access necessary sexual and reproductive health care? What evidence and learning have LGBTQ+ advocates provided to inform making these more wholistic services? If such evidence and learning does not exist, how can this be gathered?

in the Colombian armed conflict due to factors such as fear or shame of reporting non-normative sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions. There is also a continuing distrust of institutions and experiences of revictimization. Finally, as is the case with many harms of gendered discrimination, there are difficulties proving that violence that did happen was motivated by transphobia or homophobia.

A queer and feminist approach to protection looks to actors other than the police and military to determine what creates a secure space. To do so means dismantling the patriarchal limitations within the current judicial systems. Sometimes it may mean looking to one's own LGBTQ+ community as the source of discrimination and that protection of sexual (or other) rights can be advanced by using state policies or processes (eg anti-discrimination laws). The current individualised protection approach, however, is costly and isolating. Alternatively, community-focused responses are more sustainable, allowing for ways of accessing protection without having to rely on actors who LGBTQ+ people feel safer working with other than traditional security forces.

Homophobic and transphobic violence manifests as a form of everyday patriarchal violence. This everyday violence is present in times of peace and in times of conflict. Seeing and responding to this violence against LGBTQ+ people is one way to domesticate WPS implementation.²⁴

Actions to queer protection in women, peace and security

Design system for officials to adequately gather and respond to complaints about the violation of rights of LGBTQ+ people in conflict. Identify the particular and disproportionate effects of violence against LGBTQ+ people, recognising the impact of discrimination and prejudice on their lives. Disaggregate these findings by sex, gender, and race. Develop trainings to strengthen the capacity to identify discrimination against LGBTQ+ people. This analysis of discrimination should feed back into the prevention approach. Assure external monitoring, recognizing that in many places, officials themselves are violating LGBTQ+ people's rights.

Create strategies for the prevention and protection of LGBTQ+ children and adolescents from physical and emotional abuse.²⁵

Where possible within a supportive environment, be sure these initiatives involve families and educational environments.

Map safe and unsafe places for LGBTQ+ people in their daily lives. This information can be used to create new protective measures and to analyse reported acts of violence. Identify individuals with specialized knowledge of bias-based violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity who can be notified of a risk or act of violence, and who can activate the rest of the safety route to mitigate, prevent or stop the risk.

Study previous patterns of GBV to develop a strategy to mitigate risks for LGBTQ+ people to this violence. Disaggregate data, assuring there is specific attention to LGBTQ women's experiences. Ensure access to effective redress for LGBTQ+ victims of GBV.

Strengthen ties between women's organizations and LGBTQ+ organizations. Doing so would also help these organisations develop, adopt, and operationalise feminist analysis of the links between LGBTQ+ rights and WPS. LGBTQ+ organizations are already doing extensive work that fits within WPS including legal aid and strategic litigation, rights awareness and direct service provision, documentation and reporting, and advocacy (through media, online campaigns and cultural activism). These groups could also collaborate with ongoing work engaging local and foreign governments.

Reflective Exercise:

Audit WPS projects to answer the following two questions:

1. How are lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer women present in the data you collect about women in conflict?
2. How can you collect and share more stories of what matters to LGBTQ+ people for security peace and justice?

1.4 Queering the Relief and Recovery Pillar of Women, Peace and Security

Train local LGBTQ+ and feminist organizations on security issues (e. g. protocols with selfprotection measures) and safeguarding. Safeguarding means protecting against harm and abuse caused by NGO programs that may result from unsafe programmes, unsafe communications and media and abuse perpetrated by staff.

Protection also needs to focus on online threats against LGBTQ+ communities. LGBTQ+ people face lots of hate speech, misinformation and disinformation online. This violence should be taken seriously, even though it is not a physical form of violence. Feminist organizations can reiterate solidarity with LGBTQ+ across social media, at public events and on organizational websites.

The relief and recovery pillar is an expansive, if ambiguous, aspect of WPS implementation. Providing relief and recover for many lesbian, bisexual, transgender and queer women means providing even the most basic access to health care, legal support and safe spaces for community organizing.

LGBTQ+ people have not been able to access effective responses to traditional, let alone transitional justice. There is historical social and legal impunity for genderbased violence, and a lack of recognition of transphobic and homophobic violence as a dimension of violent conflict. This means that the victims of these events have not been able to access comprehensive reparations or guarantees of non-repetition. LGBTQ+ people are also often excluded from humanitarian relief programs.

Historically, LGBTQ+ people have faced economic insecurity due to lack of access to education, housing, health, and work. In conflict, armed actors take advantage of these vulnerabilities and instrumentalize violence against queer and trans communities, further aggravating their insecurity. As NGOs and LGBTQ+ organization have reported, this insecurity worsens during times of conflict.

In Colombia, despite clear indicators of prejudice against LGBT people, there is still an under-representation of the harms against LGBTQ+ people in conflict. This absence is in part due to fear or

shame in reporting non-normative sexual orientations or gender identities or expressions. There continues to be a lack of trust in institutions, or fear of experiences of revictimization when reporting violence. It is still difficult to report violence based on prejudice against LGBTQ+ people. Education and training to address these fears can be part of the relief and recovery work feminist organizations invest in to transform social norms about gender.

While longer-term sustainable relief in post is a lack of interest in searching for LGBT missing people. This lack of interest is in part because they may have been rejected and thrown out of their home or family or social group, but many may simply not have someone to look for them. As evident in the suggested actions listed below, implementing the relief and recovery pillar align well with achieving sustainable development goals (SDG)s. Jacqui True and Sara Hewitt argue the relief and recovery pillar has, "the most transformative potential to connect both short-term and long-term goals to achieve sustainable peace, development, and resilience, while also promoting women's participation and socioeconomic rights."²⁶ LGBTQ women should be part of defining this transformation.²⁷

Health care for LGBTQ+ people too

Health care systems were not designed for LGBTQ+ people. Heteronormative prejudices within the health care system have consequences for LGBTQ+ people's physical and emotional. For example, in Colombia, there are no guarantees for transition support for trans people, and in the UK the wait list for NHS transition care is years long. Traditionally, health promotion and prevention programs for LGBTQ+ people have stigmatized them and reduced their attention to HIV and sexually transmitted disease. This reproduces the prejudice that LGBTQ+ people are promiscuous and contagious. As a result of these discriminations, LGBTQ+ people often only turn to the health system when problems in chronic or emergency scenarios.

Actions for queering relief and recovery

Embrace queer and trans visions for peace. Reach out LGBTQ+ leaders in your community already working to learn about their visions for transformative change. LGBTQ women working to make everyday peace in the community. This may not be "peace and security" work, but more likely direct services like responding to everyday violences and exclusions (at home, at school, in public health) encountered by LGBTQ+ people, regardless of times of peace or conflict. Conflict transformation is a time to support these otherwise marginalized visions for peace.

Develop safer spaces for LGBTQ+ people to gather as a community. Fund organizations to create their own space for community gatherings. Work with LGBTQ+ people to determine where this place should be. Consult with LGBTQ+ community members about what support other human rights organizations can offer as allies.

Support LGBTQ+ people within your country's asylum system. Be sure LGBTQ+ people are connected directly with local LGBTQ+ organizations. Assure LGBTQ+ people have access to queer-supportive health care providers even while in detention centres.²⁸

Promote access to comprehensive health, including mental health care, for LGBTQ+ people²⁹. Design training processes for health care professionals to make a safe space for LGBTQ+ people. Ensure access to medicines, procedures, and transition without pathology. Be sure LGBTQ women have access to comprehensive reproductive health care. LGBTQ+ couples should also have access to postpartum/post-adoption services and guaranteed parental leave. Identify and distribute a list of community resources and contacts for leaders from the LGBTQ+ community.

Include LGBTQ+ people's experiences in sex education. Implement a sex education program for LGBTQ+ people with a focus on dignity, enjoyment, and pleasure, with guarantees of confidentiality. Include access to methods of contraception, emergency and protection and enable the accompaniment of sexuality professionals.

Become familiar with the Diverse SOGIESC focused Rapid Assessment Tool that can be used to assess diverse SOGIESC Inclusion results in humanitarian emergencies. The tool was developed in 2021 with UN Women and Edge Effect Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment focused Rapid Assessment Tool for humanitarian contexts.³⁰

Review when LGBTQ+ people can access the justice system. Assess discriminatory laws and policies, including those that do not specifically target LGBTQ+ people but have a discriminatory impact, intentional or unintentional.